

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A medallion to be worn by a user, the medallion being functional in more than one mode, the medallion comprising:
 - 5 an image display, responsive to input power, for providing at least one illuminated image by means of said image display;
 - a power source, responsive to a fade-in signal and a fade-out signal, for providing the input power to the image display;
 - mode selection means, responsive to a selection from the user who
 - 10 selects a mode of operation, for providing a repetitive mode selection signal if the user selects a repetitive mode;
 - timing control means, responsive to the repetitive mode selection signal from the mode selection means, for automatically providing the fade-in signal indicative of increased power, and the fade-out signal indicative of decreased
 - 15 power, repeatedly.
2. The medallion of claim 1 wherein the more than one mode includes the repetitive mode in which the at least one illuminated image fades in and later fades out if the environment is dark, and an off mode in which the image is not visible if the
- 20 medallion is in a dark environment, and a fully on mode in which the at least one illuminated image is fully visible without fading.
3. The medallion of claim 1, wherein the timing control means is also for operating the medallion with less than full power at substantially all times during the
- 25 repetitive mode, and for varying the power during the repetitive mode so that the at least one illuminated image has an intensity that appears constant to a human eye over a period of less than five seconds.

4. The medallion of claim 1, wherein the power source comprises a battery, and also comprises a switching device for regulating the power flow from the battery.

5. The medallion of claim 1, further comprising a memory for receiving the at least one image via an infrared signal to the medallion, and for providing the at least one illuminated image to the image display, wherein the image display includes a transflective liquid crystal display with a backlight.

6. The medallion of claim 5, further comprising a communication interface, for outputting image data from the medallion or inputting image data to the medallion.

7. The medallion of claim 3, wherein the power source is for powering the image display with less than or equal to half of the full power at substantially all times during the repetitive mode.

8. The medallion of claim 1, wherein each repetition during the repetitive mode includes an off stage, a fade-in stage, an on stage, and a fade-out stage.

9. The medallion of claim 8, wherein the on stage has an on duration, and the off stage has an off duration, and the on duration has a ratio to the off duration that is substantially equal to a constant.

10. The medallion of claim 9, wherein the constant ratio is less than or substantially equal to one half.

11. The medallion of claim 8, wherein any two of the repetitions respectively have a first duration and a second duration that differ by a difference that is less than one-tenth of the first duration.

12. The medallion of claim 1, wherein the power source comprises a battery that is rechargeable while the battery is still located within the medallion.

13. The medallion of claim 4 wherein the switching device comprises means for
5 creating a duty cycle which is altered in order to alter the power flow.

14. The medallion of claim 11, wherein the difference has a random element.

15. The medallion of claim 1, wherein the image display comprises a liquid crystal
10 display and a transfective film for at least partially reflecting environmental light and at least partially lighting up the at least one image in the presence of environmental light.

16. The medallion of claim 3, wherein the timing control means comprises
15 software, embodied in a machine readable media that is encoded with a data structure for operating the timing control means.

17. The medallion of claim 4, wherein the switching device is a transistor having a duty cycle that changes in response to the fade-in signal and the fade-out signal.
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18. The medallion of claim 8, wherein each of the stages begins at a time that is selected by the timing control means with a degree of randomness.

19. A method of operating a medallion worn by a user, the medallion being
25 functional in more than one mode, the method comprising the steps of:

selecting a mode of operation,
providing a repetitive mode selection signal if the repetitive mode is
selected,

automatically providing a fade-in signal indicative of increased power,
and a fade-out signal indicative of decreased power, repetitively,
inputting power to an image display,
providing at least one illuminated image by means of said image display
5 in response to the power.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein the more than one mode includes the repetitive
mode in which the at least one illuminated image fades in and later fades out if the
medallion is in a dark environment, and an off mode in which the image is not visible
10 if the medallion is in a dark environment, and a fully on mode in which the at least one
illuminated image is fully visible without fading.

21. The method of claim 19, wherein the medallion operates with less than full power
at substantially all times during the repetitive mode, and wherein the power-up signal
15 and the power-down signal slowly vary the power during the repetitive mode so that
the at least one illuminated image has an intensity that appears constant to a human eye
over a period of less than five seconds.

22. The method of claim 20, further comprising the step of utilizing environmental
20 light to at least partially illuminate the image, by equipping the medallion with a liquid
crystal display that is transfective.

23. The method of claim 19, wherein the step of providing the fade-in signal and the
fade-out signal is performed at times that are selected with a degree of randomness.